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THE UNITED STATES PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE

What does it do for me?

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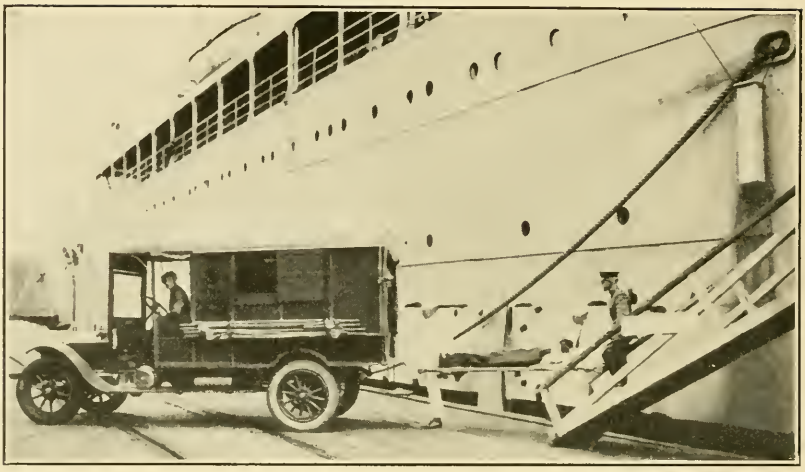
Boarding a vessel at a United States quarantine station

THE UNITED STATES PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE

WHAT DOES IT DO FOR ME?

SHIPS and trade; railroads and travel; immigrants; clean ports; infected ports; epidemics; bills of health. These spell duty for the Public Health Service. You may have noticed soon after your ship passed the Golden Gate or Sandy Hook she hoisted a yellow flag and the quarantine officer (Public Health Service) came aboard to look at you. And if you came from a port having cholera or bubonic plague



A Marine Hospital ambulance meeting a ship at dock

or typhus or yellow fever, he looked at you twice. You may have seen this same doctor in the Philippines, Hawaii, Porto Rico, Virgin Islands, or the Canal Zone a dozen years ago, or in a consul's office in China or Europe. He is moved from time to time and alternates in quarantine and hospital or other duties.

When your ship docked, you saw the marine hospital ambulance there to meet that freighter for a seaman who broke his leg the fourth day out. The captain did a good first-aid job on him after talking it over by radio with the nearest marine hospital. Yes, the marine hospitals are run by the Public Health Service too—have been for 128 years. It used to be called the Marine Hospital Service. In every port of the United States and insular possessions where there is water enough to float a ship worth while there is a marine hospital or a contract with some other hospital, and a place where sick and disabled seamen from American merchant ships are cared for. Not the Devil Dogs—they go to the naval hospitals; the marine hospitals are for merchant seamen and men from Coast Guard cutters, life-saving stations, lightships, and lighthouses. An aid given to merchant vessels since 1798, or since the Government was only nine years old, has become, one might say, almost a habit. The sailors began it. They paid, until 1882, money from their own pockets, at first 20 cents per month and later 40 cents, to support the marine hospitals. That's why the old salts are proud of the places and say, "We built 'em." But about forty years ago Uncle Sam decided he would support the sailors' hospitals himself, and he also uses some of these hospital beds for taking care of employees of his who get hurt while on duty. More than 3,000 hospital beds are constantly occupied by old salts, showing that in bearing this expense, which, according to maritime laws, the ships themselves would otherwise have to bear, the United States Government is giving its merchant marine no small assistance.

Muster of immigrants for inspection by medical officers, U. S. Public Health Service

When you said good-bye to the captain he was mustering the steerage passengers for the medical examination that all immigrants must pass, either at Ellis Island or elsewhere. The medical officer examining these immigrants wore the same kind of uniform that the quarantine officer and ambulance doctor wore because he is also from the Public Health Service. His buttons and cap bear the same corps device that you saw on the ambulance and on the quarantine launch's flag—the fouled anchor, sign of a ship in trouble. Yes, the Public Health Service examines all immigrants entering the country, in order that the feeble-minded, the insane, and the diseased may be sent back; and now these medical officers are also stationed in Great Britain, Irish Free State, Belgium, Holland, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Germany, Poland, and other foreign countries, to make examinations before the immigrant sails.

The boatswain had a grievance? I know. Too bad! He is an able man and wanted to become a pilot and then a licensed officer and maybe some day a captain and have a ship of his own. But he could not pass the vision and color vision tests. Sure they have to. A man who can not tell a green light from a red one has no business at the wheel. He must be able to see test signals through fog and smoke and call colors right, or the doctor throws him. Yes, the Public Health Service makes the examinations. There is not a licensed officer on any American ship that sails the seven seas who did not first have to go to the marine

A Marine Hospital where merchant seamen are treated

hospital office for his certificate. They must qualify in first aid to the injured, too, and the doctors teach them what to do in all kinds of emergencies before the Steamboat Inspection Service will issue their licenses.

Railroads and travel? Maybe you drank water on your train. It's all right, don't worry. The Public Health Service names the places and the conditions where drinking water may be taken on trains just as it does for ships engaged in interstate trade. You may have noticed that nurse, too, in the Pullman. She had a patient in the drawing room who had some communicable disease. She had to have her permits from the Public Health Service and her instructions, and you may be sure that compartment was well fumigated before it was used again. The patient? Oh, it may have been a leper en route to the National Home for Lepers (Marine Hospital No. 66) in Louisiana, where the Public Health Service has nearly 300 such patients, and where it is gradually rounding them up to wipe out the disease in this country.

Does it help the States? Yes, the Public Health Service assists State and local health authorities in life saving, disease-preventing programs which save more each year than the Service costs the tax payers.

Common colds? Nearly everybody has two or three a year. Forty per cent of the time lost in industry is due to respiratory diseases. The Public Health Service is studying these diseases, so that health officers can better control them.

Immigrants with contagious disease are excluded

What else does the Public Health Service do? It investigates the pollution of rivers and a multitude of other conditions affecting the health of the people, inspects and licenses establishments manufacturing antitoxins and vaccines, and in its Hygienic Laboratory at Washington tests these products; it supplies medical officers for all cruising cutters of the Coast Guard, suppresses epidemics, supervises sanitation in the national parks, makes the physical examinations of civil-service applicants, and treats civil employees of the Government who are injured or disabled as the result of their employment. It examines claimants for pensions, too, and decides whether persons employed by the Government suspected of having communicable diseases are a menace to other employees or the public. After the World War the Public Health Service was the principal agency whereby World War veterans were cared for, and in 1922 it turned over to the Veterans' Bureau 57 hospitals, with 17,500 beds, 900 doctors, 1,400 nurses, and 9,200 other employees.

And in time of war the Public Health Service becomes a part of the military forces of the Government.

The story of over a hundred years of work can not be told in a few pages, so only a few facts about the Service will be given.

Drinking water on trains is certified by the U. S. Public Health Service

FACTS ABOUT THE UNITED STATES PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE

Organized in 1798; formerly called the United States Marine Hospital Service.

It is a bureau in the Treasury Department; has a Surgeon General and a corps of medical officers commissioned by the President.

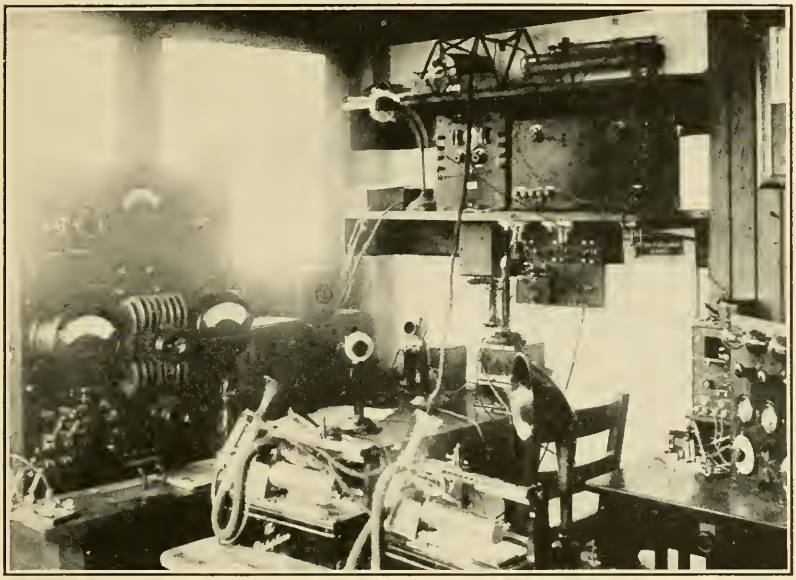
Conducts the national quarantine stations; yearly inspects more than 22,000 vessels and 2,000,000 persons.

Makes the medical examination of all immigrants. Much of this work is done by its officers in foreign countries.

Investigates the diseases of man; publishes and distributes pamphlets on various diseases. Publishes weekly reports of health officers at home and abroad.

Conducts research at its great Hygienic Laboratory in Washington, D. C., and at a number of field stations throughout the country.

Examines serums and vaccines for purity and potency; issues licenses to approved manufacturers.



Medical advice to ships at sea and public health talks are sent by radio

Demonstrated that pellagra is due to improper diet, and curable.

Furnishes a standard unit to insure diphtheria antitoxin of proper strength.

Discovered tularemia, a disease conveyed from wild rabbits to persons.

Identified the American hookworm as a cause of anemia.

Prepared a standard milk ordinance, now adopted by ten States.

Studied pollution of the Great Lakes and the rivers, and the methods of controlling it.

Controlled bubonic plague in our ports by destroying rats and ground squirrels.

Freed New Orleans from yellow fever in 1905 by mosquito control. Reduced the prevalence of malaria in the South.

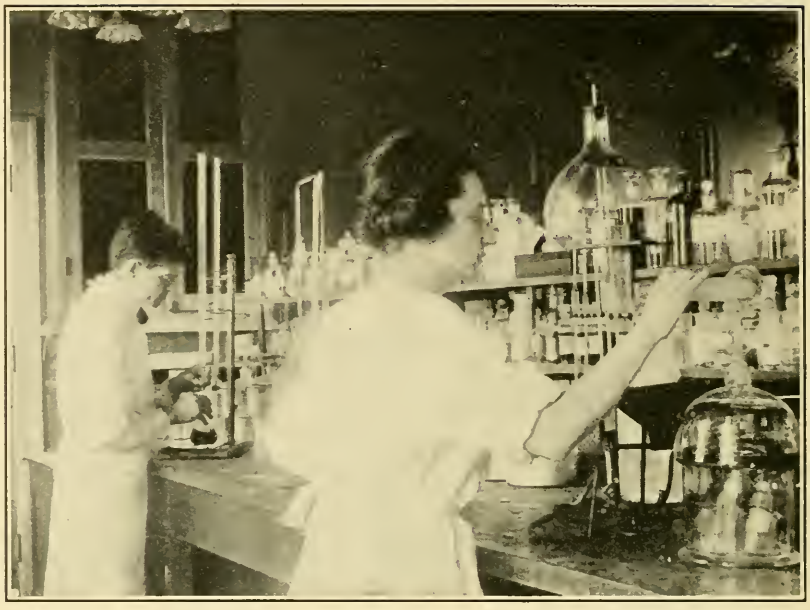
Operates 25 marine hospitals and 150 relief stations for merchant seamen.

Treats annually 200,000 beneficiaries, furnishes 1,342,000 hospital patient days and 493,000 out-patient treatments.

Beneficiaries include merchant seamen, Coast Guardsmen, injured Federal employees, lighthouse keepers, and patients of Army, Navy, and United States Veterans' Bureau.

Marine Hospital No. 9, at Fort Stanton, New Mexico, is for tuberculous merchant seamen and Coast Guardsmen.

Conducts the National Leper Home with 300 patients at Carville, Louisiana.



Antitoxins and vaccines are tested at the Hygienic Laboratory, U. S. Public Health Service, Washington, D. C.

Acts as a clearing house of information on health matters for labor and the industries.

Prescribes conditions for use of tetraethyl lead in gasoline; investigates health hazards in industry; value of sunlight; factory and office illumination; and many other things which benefit the worker.

Designates places where trains and vessels may take water supplies and regulates the travel of diseased persons.

Assists the various States in establishing full-time county health departments and in farm sanitation.

Cooperates with the States to control venereal infections.

Investigates the diseases of children and demonstrates child hygiene.

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